

Civil Rights Advisory Council

November 14, 2006

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Christine Kaufmann (Chair), Dorothy Eck, June Hermanson, Marilyn Kramer, Katie Stevens

Staff Present: Linda Carlson, Kathy Bean, and Mark Squires of the Montana Office of Community Service

Absent: Murray Pierce, Jessie James-Hawley

Guests: Denise Juneau (OPI – Director of Indian Education)

Presentation:

Civil Rights Issues for Montana's Indian, Denise Juneau.

Denise described the OPI initiatives – 2 Pillars: Indian Education for All and Indian Student Achievement. She presented many handouts illustrating the challenges and the work being accomplished by her and her department. She stressed how inadequate Montana teachers and students knowledge is of Indian history and culture and that the first step is to educate the educators and provide better professional development. Indian populations have to deal with concentrated generational poverty, rural unemployment because of lack of job opportunities, high dropout rates, lower test scores than the average population of Montanans and not enough state employee and state agency involvement. Also, there is not enough communication between state departments about the grant monies that are available to each department so that the money could be used most efficiently and cooperatively, with focus on the top priorities. Denise also described the resources available through the OPI Department and its website; for educational resources, funding resources and help in spending the funding most productively. June Hermanson asked for data concerning Indians with disabilities, and Denise agreed to provide.

Christine Kaufmann stated that at this time the council has not decided which issue to focus on for 2007. Denise suggested focus could be on unemployment and economic development in Indian communities.

Adopt minutes:

Dorothy Eck moved to adopt the minutes from the last meeting. Marilyn Kramer seconded the motion and the minutes were adopted.

Review of Action Plans:

- Goal: To connect the issues of human rights in the public's mind (see blue copy).

Regarding Dec. 10 announcement: The Governor's Office is on board per Linda Carlson, but the Governor's schedule is unclear at this time.

- Goal: To advise and encourage the Governor to support legislation that provides full measures of civil rights to all Montanans (see pink copy). Christine passed out a list of currently tracked bills regarding civil rights. She will continue to track and distribute bills that may be of interest to the Council.

A suggestion was made that the council stay in contact with meeting *Presenters* (Denise Juneau, Mary Caffero, etc.) about bills that effect their positions.

- Goal: To promote an event as a reminder to the people of Montana of the importance of the history and legacy of MLK and civil right movement (see yellow copy). Each member of the Council will check with their community legislators, commissioners, etc. as to events that will then be added to the statewide calendar and the OCS website in early December. Publicizing of the calendar will take place in early January with the Council's *stamp* on it and the Governor's Office will provide press release on the importance of MLK.

June Hermanson proposed that the bills the Council has tracked regarding civil rights also be publicized. Linda encouraged letters to the editor.

- Goal: Work to update legislation protecting civil rights of people with disabilities and for people of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender sexual orientation (white copy). Christine suggested that there is no time to hold hearings before the legislature convenes and that to hold hearings during the legislature would not be best.

- Goal: Select one or more topics to investigate through community forums to provide data for a report to the Governor on civil rights (2nd white copy). Discussion of many topics led to narrowing them down to the following: Christine will write a statement for the inclusion of *sexual orientation* in the State's Civil Rights Statement, noting that the Civil Rights Advisory Council agrees to support this statement. Christine will ask Murray Pierce to condense his proposal on mental health issues for juvenile defendants, Katie Stevens will write a proposal on accessibility to higher education, Christine will ask Denise Juneau to write a proposal for Indian Education, June will write a proposal for disability education, and Dorothy mentioned home schooling as a possible proposal. Christine will clarify the topics and distribute them to Council members and they will be addressed during a January 2007 conference call.

It is a Council goal to provide at least 3 hearings, set up through The Governor's Office, for 2007.

UN Declaration of Rights, Dec 10, 2006:

Christine Kaufmann's document was discussed and approved with minor edits and the inclusion of quotes attributed to Christine, Dorothy and Marilyn.

Next meeting will be a conference call Jan. 9th, 07, @ 4:00p.m.

Meeting adjourned.

Amendment from meeting 1/25/7:

Jesse corrected minutes from the September meeting. She had stated that the State of Montana would do well to recognize Indian leaders. This was not recorded in the September minutes. The September, as well as the November, minutes will be amended.

